United Nations A/AC.259/L.17

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
23 March 2016

Original: English

United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea
Seventeenth meeting
13-17 June 2016

Format and annotated provisional agenda

1. Pursuant to resolution 54/33, in which the General Assembly established the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (Informal Consultative Process), the two Co-Chairs appointed by the President of the Assembly will develop, in consultation with delegations, a format for the discussions at the Informal Consultative Process that best facilitates its work, in accordance with the rules of procedure and practices of the Assembly. It is recalled that the mandate of the Informal Consultative Process was extended by the Assembly for three-year periods by resolutions 57/141 and 60/30, and for additional two-year periods by resolutions 63/111, 65/37 A, 67/78 and 69/245.

2. On the basis of consultations with delegations and an informal preparatory meeting held at United Nations Headquarters on 21 March 2016, the Co-Chairs, Gustavo Meza-Cuadra (Peru) and Nicholas Emiliou (Cyprus), have developed a format for the discussions at the seventeenth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process (see annex I) and have proposed a provisional agenda for the meeting (see annex II).

3. The areas of concentration for the discussion panel on the topic "Marine debris, plastics and microplastics" are presented in annex III and are intended to identify important issues that the discussion panel may wish to consider.

4. The Informal Consultative Process is invited to consider and adopt the provisional agenda.

16-04838 (E) 010416

Please recycle

Annex I

Format for the seventeenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

Methods of work

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/33, the seventeenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process will work through plenary sessions and a discussion panel.

2. The plenary sessions and discussion panel will be open to participation by all those listed in paragraph 3 (a) of General Assembly resolution 54/33 and by representatives of major groups, as identified in section III of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

3. Within the constraints of the available space, such representatives of major groups and other observers will be free to attend the plenary sessions in accordance with established practice.

Agenda

4. The Co-Chairs will propose a draft agenda setting out a programme of work for the meeting and a timetable for the plenary sessions and the discussion panel. The draft agenda will take into account paragraphs 304, 306 and 312 of General Assembly resolution 70/235 of 23 December 2015. The seventeenth meeting will consider and adopt its agenda and timetable accordingly.

Discussion panel

5. In paragraph 298 of resolution 69/245, as recalled in paragraph 312 of resolution 70/235, the General Assembly decided that the meeting would focus its discussions on the topic entitled "Marine debris, plastics and microplastics". On the basis of their consultations with delegations, the Co-Chairs have proposed an outline for the topic to be considered by the discussion panel. The Co-Chairs intend to invite a number of panellists to launch the discussions by making short presentations on relevant aspects.

Outcome of the seventeenth meeting

6. The outcome will consist of a Co-Chairs' summary of issues and ideas raised and discussed during the plenary sessions. It will also reflect issues and ideas raised during the discussion panel. As with past practice, the outcome will include issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea. The advance and unedited text of the summary will be presented to the meeting. The Co-Chairs will transmit the outcome of the meeting to the President of the General Assembly.

Annex II

Annotated provisional agenda for the seventeenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

Monday, 13 June 2016 **10 a.m.-1 p.m.**[a]

First plenary session

Item 1. Opening of the seventeenth meeting

1. The Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, as well as the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, or their designated representatives, will open the proceedings on behalf of the Secretary-General.

2. The Co-Chairs will make opening remarks.

Item 2. Adoption of the agenda

3. The Informal Consultative Process is invited to consider and, as appropriate, to adopt the agenda of the seventeenth meeting. The schedule of agenda items is only indicative; items may be advanced, depending on the progress made in the discussions.

Item 3. General exchange of views

4. It is suggested that during the general exchange of views delegations may wish to address in particular the topic of the seventeenth meeting, "Marine debris, plastics and microplastics".

5. Owing to time constraints and the potential number of speakers, delegations are kindly requested to limit their interventions to no more than five minutes.

3-6 p.m.[a]

Discussion panel
Marine debris, plastics and microplastics

6. On the basis of areas of concentration for the discussion panel set forth in annex III, it is proposed that the discussion panel segments be organized as set out below. It is proposed that each segment begin with panel presentations, followed by discussions among delegations and panellists.

Segment 1
The environmental, social and economic dimensions of marine debris, plastics and microplastics and progress made in preventing, reducing and controlling pollution from marine debris, plastics and microplastics

(a) Panel presentations;

(b) Discussion.

[a] All sessions will begin promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Tuesday, 14 June 2016 **10 a.m.-1 p.m.**[a]

Discussion panel (*continued*)

Segment 1 (continued)
The environmental, social and economic dimensions of marine debris, plastics and microplastics and progress made in preventing, reducing and controlling pollution from marine debris, plastics and microplastics

(a) Panel presentations;

(b) Discussion.

3-6 p.m.[a]

Segment 2
Challenges, lessons learned, best practices and way forward to prevent, reduce and control pollution from marine debris, plastics and microplastics

(a) Panel presentations;

(b) Discussion.

Wednesday, 15 June 2016 **10 a.m.-1 p.m.**[a]

Discussion panel (*continued*)

Segment 2 (continued)
Challenges, lessons learned, best practices and way forward to prevent, reduce and control pollution from marine debris, plastics and microplastics

(a) Panel presentations;

(b) Discussion.

3-6 p.m.[a]

Segment 2 (continued)
Challenges, lessons learned, best practices and way forward to prevent, reduce and control pollution from marine debris, plastics and microplastics

(a) Panel presentations;

(b) Discussion.

Thursday, 16 June 2016 **10 a.m.-1 p.m.**[a]

Second plenary session

Item 4. Inter-agency cooperation and coordination

7. In accordance with the terms of reference for UN-Oceans adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/70, the United Nations Legal Counsel/Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea is the focal point of UN-Oceans and represents UN-Oceans at relevant meetings, including, inter alia, those under the Assembly. To ensure transparency and accountability, UN-Oceans, upon request from the Assembly, reports to Member States in the context of the meetings of the Informal Consultative Process. In that regard, and pending such

request, the focal point of UN-Oceans will be invited to make a brief statement on the activities of UN-Oceans.

Item 5. Process for the selection of topics and panellists so as to facilitate the work of the General Assembly

8. The Informal Consultative Process will consider the recommendation of the General Assembly in paragraph 306 of resolution 70/235, that the Informal Consultative Process devise a transparent, objective and inclusive process for the selection of topics and panellists so as to facilitate the work of the Assembly during informal consultations concerning the annual resolution on oceans and the law of the sea. Delegations will be invited to make general statements and be given the opportunity to present specific proposals in that regard.

Item 6. Issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea

9. The Informal Consultative Process will be presented with a composite streamlined list of issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the General Assembly, prepared by the Co-Chairs on the basis of the lists of such issues contained in the reports on the work of the Informal Consultative Process from its fourth to sixteenth meetings (A/58/95, A/59/122, A/60/99, A/61/156, A/62/169, A/63/174 and Corr.1, A/64/131, A/65/164, A/66/186, A/67/120, A/68/159, A/69/90 and A/70/78). The Co-Chairs will inform the Informal Consultative Process of the additional issues that will have been suggested by delegations during the seventeenth meeting for inclusion in the list of issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the Assembly.

10. The Co-Chairs will recall that in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/235, paragraph 308, a further review of the effectiveness and utility of the Informal Consultative Process will be undertaken by the Assembly at its seventy-first session. Delegations will be invited to make general statements.

3-6 p.m.[a]

[Reserved]

Friday, 17 June 2016 **10 a.m.-1 p.m.[a]**

Third plenary session

Item 7. Consideration of the outcome of the meeting

11. The Informal Consultative Process will be provided with an opportunity to consider the outcome of the meeting. In accordance with the draft format for the meeting (see annex I), the outcome will consist of a Co-Chairs' summary of issues and ideas raised and discussed during the plenary sessions. It will also reflect issues and ideas raised during the discussion panel. The outcome will further include issues that could benefit from attention in the future work of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea.

3-6 p.m.[a]

Fourth plenary session

Item 7. Consideration of the outcome of the meeting (continued)

Annex III

Proposed areas of concentration for the discussion panel on the topic "Marine debris, plastics and microplastics"

Information contained in the report of the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly decided in resolution 69/245 of 29 December 2014, and recalled in resolution 70/235 of 23 December 2015, that, in its deliberations on the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, the seventeenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea would focus its discussions on the topic "Marine debris, plastics and microplastics". Pending issuance of the report of the Secretary-General in all official languages, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea has made available on its website (www.un.org/Depts/los/) advance and unedited reporting material on oceans and the law of the sea for the seventy-first session of the Assembly, relating to this topic.

Discussion panel segments

2. In considering the possible approaches for structuring the discussion panel segments in relation to the topic of focus of the seventeenth meeting, it may be recalled that the General Assembly, in resolution 70/235, recognized the role of the Informal Consultative Process as a unique forum for comprehensive discussions on issues related to oceans and the law of the sea, consistent with the framework provided by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and chapter 17 of Agenda 21, and that the perspective of the three pillars of sustainable development should be further enhanced in the examination of the selected topics. The Assembly also recognized the primary role of the Informal Consultative Process in integrating knowledge, the exchange of opinions among multiple stakeholders and coordination among competent agencies, and enhancing awareness of topics, including emerging issues, while promoting the three pillars of sustainable development.

3. In considering the topic of focus, it is therefore proposed that the respective panel segments concentrate their discussions on the following areas:

(a) *The environmental, social and economic dimensions of marine debris, plastics and microplastics and progress made in preventing, reducing and controlling pollution from marine debris, plastics and microplastics*

4. The panel segment could provide an overview of the sources and pathways of, and knowledge gaps relating to, marine debris, plastics and microplastics and elaborate on each of the dimensions of sustainable development, namely the environmental, social and economic dimensions of the issue. Following the sixth meeting of the Informal Consultative Process, which had focused its discussions on marine debris, and the calls for action contained in the subsequent annual resolutions of the General Assembly on oceans and the law of the sea, the panel segment could also consider the progress made in preventing, reducing and controlling pollution from marine debris, plastics and microplastics, including by providing an overview of the scope and types of current activities and initiatives at the global, regional, national and local levels, aimed at addressing the issue.

(b) Challenges, lessons learned, best practices and way forward to prevent, reduce and control pollution from marine debris, plastics and microplastics

5. The panel could discuss the measures/enabling framework that may be needed at the global, regional and national levels to strengthen the response towards meeting the internationally agreed commitments related to marine debris, plastics and microplastics, bearing in mind in particular the commitment in Sustainable Development Goal 14 to prevent and significantly reduce marine debris by 2025.

6. To that end, the panel segment could be divided into two subsegments focused on prevention of the introduction of debris, plastics and microplastics into the marine environment; and reduction and control of pollution from marine debris, plastics and microplastics. In considering those issues, particular attention could be given to microplastics. Throughout the two subsegments, various perspectives on the challenges, lessons learned, best practices and way forward with respect to marine debris, plastics and microplastics could be provided. Issues related to capacity-building and transfer of technology, as well as cooperation and coordination at all levels, would also be integrated throughout.